

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 199351

61

ORIGIN ARA-20

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R 111731Z SEP 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMCONSUL BELIZE
DEA EOIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 199351

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR
SUBJECT: OPRED - JUSTICE/DEA STAFFING, COSTA RICA AND
GUATEMALA

1. AS EXPLAINED IN THE REFERENCED CABLE, PLANNING IS
UNDERWAY FOR INCREASES IN DEA STAFFING IN ARA, INCLUDING
CENTRAL AMERICA, DURING FY 1975. DEA PROPOSES TO OPEN AN
OFFICE IN GUATEMALA STAFFED BY TWO SPECIAL AGENTS AND A
SECRETARY AND TO ADD A SECOND SPECIAL AGENT TO ITS SAN JOSE
OFFICE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 199351

2. DEA HAS LEARNED FROM ITS INVESTIGATIONS IN OTHER AREAS,

FROM TESTIMONY TAKEN IN GRAND JURY AND COURT CASES IN THE U.S., AND FROM CENTRAL AMERICAN SOURCES THAT CENTRAL AMERICA IS STEADILY INCREASING IN IMPORTANCE AS A TRANSSHIPMENT AREA FOR NARCOTICS FROM SOUTH AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD. THIS IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY IN GUATEMALA AND COSTA RICA. THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN GUATEMALA HAS BEEN THE SCENE OF RELATIVELY LARGE SEIZURES. THERE HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT SEIZURES OF DRUGS ON THE MEXICO-GUATEMALA BORDER.

3. UNILATERAL HOST COUNTRY POLICE ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT CENTRAL AMERICA IS LARGELY LIMITED TO INTERDICTION OF LOCAL MARIHUANA TRADERS AND NORTH AMERICAN "HIPPY" ELEMENTS ENGAGING IN LOW LEVEL DRUG TRANSACTIONS. INCREASED DEA PRESENCE IN LATIN AMERICA WILL SUPPORT COUNTRY TEAM EFFORTS

TO INDUCE HOST GOVERNMENTS TO RAISE THEIR SIGHTS TO MORE SERIOUS LEVELS OF TRAFFIC DAMAGING TO THEIR COUNTRIES AND OF GREATER IMPORTANCE TO THE U.S.

4. PRIOR TO THE RECENT OPENING OF AN OFFICE IN COSTA RICA, DEA COVERED CENTRAL AMERICA ON A TDY BASIS OUT OF THE MEXICO CITY REGIONAL OFFICE. DEA FOUND THAT THIS SYSTEM DID NOT WORK VERY WELL. IT COULD NOT MAINTAIN CONTINUITY IN ITS WORK IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND IN ITS RELATIONS WITH LOCAL NARCOTICS LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. FULLY STAFFED OFFICES IN COSTA RICA AND GUATEMALA WILL NOT ONLY INCREASE DEA'S EFFECTIVENESS IN THOSE COUNTRIES, BUT INCREASE ITS CAPABILITY TO RESPOND MORE EFFECTIVELY ON A TDY BASIS IN SUPPORT OF THE MEXICO CITY OFFICE THROUGHOUT THE REST OF CENTRAL AMERICA. (DEA PROCEDURES REQUIRE ADVANCE NOTIFICATION TO EMBASSIES PRIOR TO PROPOSED TDY.) PERMANENTLY STAFFED OFFICES IN COSTA RICA AND GUATEMALA ALSO AFFORD THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECRUIT AND MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH INFORMANTS IN THE AREA WHO HAVE DIRECT KNOWLEDGE OF TRAFFICKING ELSEWHERE.

5. IT IS DEA POLICY THAT THEIR OVERSEAS OFFICES BE STAFFED BY A MINIMUM OF TWO OFFICERS SUPPORTED BY A SECRETARY. DEA EXPERIENCE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ONE-MAN OFFICES IS LIMITED. THE SECURITY OF AN AGENT IN AN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 199351

INVESTIGATIVE SITUATION WITH HOST COUNTRY COUNTERPARTS REQUIRES THE PRESENCE OF A SECOND, BACK-UP AGENT. IN ADDITION, OF COURSE, ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS OF TRAVEL, ANNUAL AND SICK LEAVE, ETC. LEAVE THE OFFICE UNCOVERED PROFESSIONALLY UNLESS THERE ARE TWO AGENTS.

6. THE DEPARTMENT HOPES THAT THE ABOVE RATIONALE TOGETHER WITH THE U.S.'S DECISION TO INCREASE DEA PRESENCE ON A

WORLD-WIDE BASIS AS EXPLAINED IN STATE 170717 WILL:

(1) PROVIDE EMBASSY GUATEMALA, IF THE EMBASSY CONCURS, WITH SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO SEEK AND OBTAIN GOG APPROVAL TO OPEN AN OFFICE AND; (2) PROVIDE EMBASSY SAN JOSE WITH SUFFICIENT GROUNDS TO APPROVE INCREASING THE DEA STAFF BY ONE SPECIAL AGENT AND, IF THE EMBASSY BELIEVES IT NECESSARY, TO SEEK AND OBTAIN GOCR PERMISSION FOR THE INCREASE.

7. EARLY REPLIES WILL BE APPRECIATED. KISSINGER

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